

reminded of a critical moment in time when our forefathers shaped a new union, one that broke from the traditional. Our Nation was built on the fundamental principle: "That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." As our forefathers endured a life of struggle, but envisioned a life of freedom, we as a Nation must keep in mind the sacrifices that they and others made and the hardships that preserve them.

As we honor individuals who contribute to upholding our civil liberties, we must also take this opportunity to appreciate them for the courage they have displayed to preserve our independence and our freedom. From our armed servicemembers who stand ready to defend our Nation, to 18-year-olds perpetuating our democracy by registering to vote, and to people of all backgrounds around the Nation reaffirming the principle of our union on a daily basis—to all, I pay tribute. Their individual contribution allows us to celebrate our independence every day.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF BELIN-BLANK CENTER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 20 years ago this summer, the Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development was established at the University of Iowa. Originally created by the Iowa Board of Regents as the Belin National Center for Gifted Education, the center was made possible by a million-dollar endowment that established the Myron and Jacqueline Blank Chair in Gifted Education, which is held to this day by Professor Nicholas Colangelo. In 1995, the center was renamed the Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, honoring a longtime leader in gifted education and a Des Moines philanthropist. In 2008, the Belin-Blank Center celebrates two decades of service to the international gifted education community.

The Belin-Blank Center has earned a strong national and international reputation for its work on behalf of gifted and talented children, which my colleagues know is a subject of great interest to me. Since its inception, the center has pioneered unique and innovative opportunities for students, including academic talent searches designed to discover gifted students; weekend and summer programs on everything from algebra, art, and 3D design to chemistry, creative writing and LEGO robotics; and the National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, which provides early admission to the university.

Professional development for educators has been the foundation upon which the work of the center has been

built. Examples of the center's work in this area include producing internationally acclaimed research symposia and developing specially designed coursework for Iowa's teachers to earn a State of Iowa endorsement in gifted education. As a result of the Belin-Blank Center's efforts, more educators today understand that supporting high-achieving students is an important aspect of successful teaching.

The Belin-Blank Center has successfully competed for private, Federal, and State grants. I am proud to say that this includes two Federal Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Grants. This program, which I have championed, is designed to improve our ability to meet the unique learning needs of gifted students nationwide. The limited funding is quite competitive and it is a testament to the quality of the Belin-Blank Center's work that it has secured two such grants. The first grant, for the years 2003 to 2006, focused on the discovery and development of giftedness in students who attend alternative high schools and the second, for the years 2005 to 2008, focused on twice-exceptional students, which are students who are gifted and also have a disability. These projects have contributed substantially to our ability to serve these populations of students, who are often overlooked for gifted education programming.

In 2004, the director and associate director of the Belin-Blank Center, Nicholas Colangelo and Susan Assouline, along with Miraca U.M. Gross, a colleague from Australia, published "A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students." The landmark report helped move the subject of gifted education and accelerated programs for high-achieving students into the educational mainstream, drawing notice from Time, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and hundreds of other media venues.

An important milestone for the center also occurred in 2004 when the Belin-Blank Center and the University of Iowa's Honors Program moved into a new building, the Myron and Jacqueline N. Blank Honors Center, which is located in the heart of the University of Iowa campus. In bringing the two programs together, the University of Iowa became one of the Nation's first schools to offer kindergarten-through-college support for gifted students under one roof.

As an Iowan and an advocate for gifted and talented education, I am very proud to have such a highly esteemed center in Iowa. For its tremendous contribution to the field of gifted education internationally and for its positive impact on the lives of countless gifted and talented students, the Belin-Blank Center is truly deserving of recognition on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL T. MICHAEL MOSELEY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an outstanding military leader and fellow Texan, GEN T. Michael Moseley. For nearly 3 years, General Moseley has served as the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, functioning as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training, and equipment of more than 710,000 Air Force personnel—active duty, Guard, and Reserve airmen, and civilians both in the United States and overseas. His service to our Air Force and to the American people has been both distinguished and admirable; he is, by all accounts, an exceptional American, a dedicated public servant, and an outstanding defender of the principles of democracy and liberty for which this Nation stands.

General Moseley was born in Dallas, TX, and grew up just south of there, in the city of Grand Prairie. His family has a long history of serving the people of Texas, and the United States as a whole. General Moseley's father, as a mason, helped build several well-known and prominent buildings in Dallas. His grandfather served the Texas law enforcement community as a member of the Texas Rangers, that legendary organization established in 1835 to range and guard the Texas Frontier. General Moseley hails from a long line of proud and noble Texans, and has greatly added to that legacy with his own distinguished service in the Air Force.

His impressive military career began in the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, where he earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in political science. On his way to becoming Air Force Chief of Staff, he held key staff positions running the gamut from operational to joint to personnel assignments. He served as commander of numerous units and organizations, including the F-15 Division of the Air Force Fighter Weapons School at Nellis AFB, the 33rd Operations Group at Eglin AFB, and the 57th Wing—the Air Force's largest, most diverse flying wing—also at Nellis AFB. He is a member of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, and he was even knighted in 2006 at the suggestion of Queen Elizabeth II, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to U.S.-United Kingdom relations while in command of air operations over Afghanistan and Iraq in the early days of the global war on terrorism. His list of medals, other awards, and accomplishments is so long as to preclude mentioning them all here.

Without a doubt, General Moseley's selfless service to the United States, especially in this arduous and vital fight against global terrorism, has been instrumental in securing the safety and liberty of all Americans. And while he will be leaving behind his noble and exemplary career with the Air Force, his contributions and the impact of his leadership will be felt for years to

come, both throughout the halls of the Pentagon, and by each and every person that had the honor of serving next to him.

It is my privilege to commend the honorable and faithful service of GEN T. Michael Moseley, and to thank him for his commitment to our country and the principles upon which it is founded.

I wish General Moseley and his wife Jennie all the best as they prepare for the future, and I thank them both for the sacrifices they have willingly made in the defense of freedom and our great Nation.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, earlier this week, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HELLO SENATOR CRAPO: The impact of the high gas and energy prices is affecting my wife and I quite a bit. My wife is disabled with severe arthritis, Crohn's Disease, and vision problems from glaucoma, and I am the only income provider for our household. I earn just enough to cancel out my wife's SSI, so we have to cover all her medical expenses that the insurance I receive from work does not cover; that is \$250.00 to \$300.00 plus. I am an employee of Kootenai County, so due to budget restraints and laws, I do not see much in the line of raises to offset cost of living expenses. My job requires that I have transportation available, and that cuts carpooling and riding a bus.

I drive 30 miles round trip for work, with a 1988 Mazda pickup that has 190,000 miles on it. If there is a good tail wind, I may get 18 mpg. Due to medical expenses and price increases for food, heating, etc., I cannot afford to purchase a newer vehicle that gets better gas mileage. With costs for gas, energy and products affected by the increases, it takes away from an already tight budget, and we have no choice but to cut back where we can. Some people say get another job, but a lot of my off time is used to assist my wife around the house, and take her for errands and medical appointments. At this point, I am concerned about what I will do when the pickup gets to the point of needing high-dollar repair work. We also live in a mobile home that uses electric heat. Sometimes my wife gets depressed that she cannot contribute financially to our household, which does not help her condition.

The two things that would help our situation would be that my income does not count

against my wife's SSI, which would be a tremendous help to the budget for medical bills and possibly a better vehicle, and, of course, the lower prices for fuel and energy.

Thanks for your assistance; it is greatly appreciated.

BOB, *Post Falls.*

Due to increased gas prices (and some unexpected medical bills), we are now a one car family. I primarily bike to work (it is only two miles away) and I have taught my son to ride the bus. He attends TVMSC at Riverglen, and we live on the East side of town (one-half hour away), so that has helped as well. My husband works out in Meridian, and he occasionally uses public transportation, but has found that the inter-county routes are underfunded and unreliable. Twice the bus has not shown up at all (due to repairs), and it can only handle two bikes, so if the bus bike rack is full, you are out of luck. I believe reducing our reliance on foreign oil is important; it will require advancement in green energy as well as personal changes. However, before the public will use alternative transportation, it has to be reliable and that requires money. Boise does a great job maintaining the green belt and I have noticed on the BSU campus, the bike racks are always full. This was not the case a year ago. This is a positive change. Now if we could work on public transportation and advancing technology to create more fuel efficient cars that are affordable. I also believe tax credits (many of which already exist) to encourage people to weatherproof (insulate/buy better windows) their homes or that encourage them to purchase energy efficient appliances would help.

Overall, I hope we reduce the amount of oil we use, not just increase oil production. I think this will help in the long run.

Thank you,

TIFFANY, *Boise.*

Thank you for trying to stop the insanity. The high gas prices have made it difficult for me to take the 20 some mile drive to Parma from Caldwell to visit my 95-year-old grandmother. Normally I go once a week. I've had to miss a week now and then because I didn't have enough money for gas. I've cut corners elsewhere to do my best to get those visits in since I know we are living on borrowed time. She's had several strokes lately, and we do not know how long she'll be with us.

It cost \$97.00 to fill my vehicle a few days ago. With my 6-year-old in baseball and my teenager in baseball, that takes a lot of gas to travel to games. I missed my teenager's games at tournament because I could not afford to drive to North Idaho and stay in a hotel. His first tournament ever—that was really hard.

I am convinced that the gas prices are affecting our grocery prices, too. My husband works in construction. The economy has slowed so much that his company is having a hard time finding work. This is a very established, well-known company. Because our income has gone down and gas and food have gone up, I'm trying to feed a family of 5 on less than \$100.00 a month. The only way I've managed to do this is because we are all hunters and have lots of meat and fish in the freezer from last year.

I'm tired of hearing how much the oil companies make!!! It is wrong to make such a huge profit off of something we really have to have in order to work and function!! If you live in a city, you can get by using the bus system or subway. I live 5 miles from the grocery store, and there is no bus system to ride. I cannot walk or ride my bike to get groceries. My husband works 100 miles from home. He comes home on weekends. The type of work he does wouldn't benefit from public

transportation either. Something has to be done about these prices.

Sincerely,

KRISTI.

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to share my story of how this price of gas is touching my life. First, I want to share my story as a consumer and also as a health care administrator. I run a good-sized nursing home in a small rural Idaho community. I was recruited to run this facility from a good distance away. I travel 130 miles a day round trip on my daily commute. I love my job and the employees I manage love me but as you can imagine 130 miles a day is a lot of gas even with a very fuel efficient vehicle, which I have. Between my wife (who is a stay-at-home mother of five children) and I, we are now spending close to \$500.00 a month on gas alone. I have a good salary but even with that, we are looking at ways to save on all we spend money on. The problem is the higher gas prices make everything else increase in price. There is no way around this as it is causing us to change our life style. It feels unfair that I worked so hard to be able to have my wife stay home, but now if the price does not go down soon, she may be forced to work just so we can survive. People would consider me well in the middle class, but we are not living that life style today. Everything is going up in price, but my salary is not and I am a lucky one. I am grateful for what I have, and I am a proud American and Idahoan. I am not complaining, but I really believe more can be done because many more than me are suffering much worse.

As an Administrator of a Healthcare Facility in a small town, the energy crisis is huge. Our costs are have doubled in many cases, but our reimbursement has not. All of my employees need a raise to combat the increase in cost of living, but this is just not feasible. Many of the employees are very low income, and I really do not see how they make it. I have many who have told me they have just stopped driving because they just cannot afford it. My heart goes out to them, and I do whatever I can to help but the neat thing is they do not blame me. They know I care, and I pay them the best I can. These are great people who care for people who cannot care for themselves. They have one of the most thankless jobs in the world, but they are true heroes in my eyes. These are the people I want you to fight for and beat this crisis. They are a true example of why this country is great. Thank you for fighting for Idaho and all America.

Sincerely,

GERALD, *Weiser.*

I am an employee of Idaho State University and I live in Blackfoot, 20 miles north of Pocatello. I am averaging \$400.00 a month in just gasoline expenses and I do not drive on the weekends unless absolutely necessary. I started this position as a 1 year temporary to hold the job open for an employee who had been offered a 1 year contract as an instructor. I was allowed to work 10 hour days and have a 3 day weekend to help with gasoline consumption but within 2 months of being awarded the position full time I was told I had to work 5 days a week at the office even though the Health Occupations chair offered me an opportunity to fill some Fridays at the Outreach in Blackfoot proctoring tests for students in my programs. To add insult to injury our political representatives that decide pay raises for state employees gave us a 1% raise which for most classified employees amounts to between ten and fifteen cents an hour and my medical benefits, which only cover my husband and myself, went up around 34.35%. Because of this I am forced to